



**AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF OPHTHALMOLOGY**
The Eye M.D. Association

Artificial Tears

When you blink, a film of tears spreads over the eye, making the surface of the eye smooth and clear. Without this tear film, good vision would not be possible.

The tear film consists of three layers: an oily layer, a watery layer, and a layer of mucus. This complex composition allows evenly distributed lubrication over the ocular surface with reduced evaporation of tears.

Artificial tears act like your own tears to lubricate the surface of your eyes. However, they cannot perfectly simulate the complex composition of your own tears, so various brands use various ingredients attempt to evenly distribute the preparation and reduce evaporation.

Below is a list of artificial tear preparations with different ingredients. Different preparations seem to work better for different patients, so we encourage you to try different brands to see what works for you.

They are all available without a prescription, and range from liquids to gels to ointments. The thicker the preparation, the longer its lubrication lasts, however thicker preparations may temporarily blur your vision.

Preservative-free eyedrops are available for people who are sensitive to the preservatives in artificial tears. If you need to use artificial tears more than every two hours, preservative-free brands may be better for you. You can use the artificial tears as often as necessary — once or twice a day or as often as several times an hour.

| Brand | Thickness | Preservative |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Gentle Tears | liquid | preserved or preservative-free |
| Refresh Tears | liquid | preserved or preservative-free |
| Refresh Endura | oily liquid | preservative-free |
| Refresh Liquigel | gel | preserved |
| Refresh Celluvisc | gel | preservative-free |
| Systane | gel | preserved or preservative-free |
| Gentle Gel | ointment | preserved |
| Refresh PM | ointment | preservative-free |

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your ophthalmologist at:

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